

THE BRUNSWICKAN OPINION & EDITORIAL

Editorial

Combatting corporate ownership

by Cindy Brown
Editor-in-Chief

At a newspaper conference on the weekend, I had the privilege of hearing a Brunswick alumnae speak on the weekend about the role of the student press.

Although her speech was quirky, funny and inspiring, there was something else about Jackie Webster which made me proud to meet her. Earlier on in her career, Jackie left her job at a certain New Brunswick newspaper, owned by a certain New Brunswick empire, because she was asked to sign (in her own words) "a Draconian contract whereby we would lose control of our material."

Jackie was one of only seven writers who refused to sign the contract and because of this, she has not since worked for that company.

Ms. Webster cared enough about what she wrote about that she would not sell out - she would not lose control over what she wrote.

The woman has integrity.

I think Jackie Webster can be a model for all. If you don't think something is right - speak out. (Although it would help if you knew something about the subject - you may end up looking like a fool).

With the press being owned by a few elite in Canada - Irving owns all of the major printing presses in New Brunswick and controls most publications - it is scary. That means that one company, with one set of ideals, has control over what New Brunswick papers publish. Talk about bias.

After Ms. Webster's speech, there was a panel discussion in which we talked about the impact the student press could have on these major corporations which owned all of the media. I don't think we could have much impact, except to maybe offer the public, as well as the university community, an alternative news source, which is much more diverse. As the Editor of this fine paper, which is "Written, Read," (self-proclaimed of course), I will print any

letter that a student sends to me. I will not print any letter which is libelous, sexist, or racist. I will also not print letters from those who have previously (on a regular basis) printed/sent in letters which are sexist, libelous, or racist. Other than that, these pages are free game.

Unfortunately, because we are small, autonomous, and free to print what we (or you) wish, we do not have a lot of money. That means we do not always have the room to print all of your letters, articles, or comics. That means that sometimes our ad content is proportionately high to our other content. But we are free.

Because we are so small and poor, I do not think it is possible for us to combat the major corporations who own all of the mainstream media.

I am not sure it is our job to do anything but make the students of our respective schools aware that there is a concentration of ownership over media, which, in most cases, means that those newspapers will be biased in a certain way. Not only will certain stories be written in a certain way - often so they don't make the owners look bad - other stories will be left out entirely.

For example, a tobacco company may refuse to allow its newspapers to print a story on the harms of tobacco.

This is information that would be relevant to many, yet readers are being deprived because it is in the company's best interest not to print such information. That is very worrisome.

The suggestion that it is the role of the student press to combat these major corporations is a little misled, however. The way in which we can combat it would be to make the student population aware that it is happening. Hopefully, upon this realization, students will begin reading the newspaper, watching television and the news in a whole different manner. Start asking questions. Realize that things are being left out.

Perhaps with a less passive readership, major corporations, such as Irving, will be unable to own and control everything.

Guest Editorial

Lord, help the students

by Chris Wilson-Smith
News Editor

Boy, am I tired. I could also use a peanut butter sandwich.

I say that because I haven't eaten in three days. I have, however, had the opportunity to sit in class, worrying that my stomach might growl and frighten the pretty girl sitting next to me.

For those of you taking copious notes, my money is spent on, in no particular order: tuition, books, rent, tuition, power bills, tuition, and sometimes food. I spend most of my time working so I can afford to stay in my apartment, stay in school, and have a chance at a future to my liking. I am no different from any other student.

I ask you: if I can't sit in class and concentrate for want of food, will I learn anything? Will I be of any use in the work world after spending four years getting a non-education?

I would say no, but just for amusement, let's imagine what Bernard Lord, Prime Minister of New Brunswick would say: Post-secondary education is of extreme importance to the Lord team. I beg of New Brunswick high school graduates: go to school in New Brunswick, and contribute to our economy. This is the word of the Lord. Or something to that effect.

Students who don't work at least a part-time job to stay in school are in the

minority. With this in mind, let's break it down. According to my Arts calculations, there are 168 hours in a week. The university recommends spending three hours of study time per one hour of class. The average student takes 15 credit hours a week. By subtracting the actual time spent on classes, this leaves us with 108 hours. At a conservative estimate, most part-time jobs take up roughly 20 hours a week. Our magic number is now at 88 hours.

To have enough time to eat a decent meal, as good health requires, roughly one and a half hours a day should be devoted to sustenance. We're left with around 80 hours.

It is recommended that a human being sleep for at least seven hours a night. We are now left with approximately 30 hours.

And what of the time "wasted" by walking to school? Or those times between classes when you don't have enough time to really accomplish anything, other than wait for the next class?

What of church? Clubs? Recreational time? Relaxing? *Eating*, for goodness sakes?

As tuition rises - and it will rise - students will be left with two choices: drop out of school, or work longer hours at their part-time jobs.

Again, tuition will rise. And I'm not convinced we can blame it wholly on the universities.

In Ontario, government post-secondary funding has decreased in the past 10 years

to a point where the universities are almost private institutions. Corporations provide the financial support now.

UNB is in a similar situation. Since 1987-88, government funding has decreased from 78% of the university's operating income to a dismal 61.5%. And how does the university make up the difference? The only way they can: bump up tuition.

John McLaughlin, the incoming president of UNB, knows the university cannot "keep expecting the students to make up the difference." He understands the students are poor, and will get even poorer. Basically, the university is being backed into a corner through lack of funding, and is being forced to open the door to the corporate world.

UNB has to look at ways in which they can make the pie bigger. Essentially, by devising new revenue sources, such as the 'Extended College of Learning' proposal (is UNB going the way of E-Bay?), the university will not have to keep hitting up the students (as much) for their lunch money.

While this theory is exciting on the surface, the problem still remains: will our government recognize that post-secondary education is a priority, not only for students but also for the economy?

Bernard Lord, Prime Minister of New Brunswick, I implore you: pass the peanut butter please.

Just a thought...

by Joanne Barr

I was going through some paperwork the other day and came across an interesting article. Permit me to share parts of it. It is titled: "People Aren't Born Happy... They have To Work At It" by Emily Wilkens.

She writes happiness and beauty go hand in hand; bitterness, hostility, anger, and depression are the enemies of loveliness, while laughter, joy, contentment and peace are beauty's best friends. Wilkens proposes it would be wonderful if you could simply push a happiness button but that's not reality. She says if a happy disposition doesn't come easily to you, conscientiously

practice the art, just as you would practice a musical instrument.

Wilkens claims happiness is making the most of every second. She wonders why anyone would waste time on ridiculous petty quarrels and malicious gossip. She advocates enjoying life now and suggests that happiness is having a goal, and contentment comes from having an objective and ultimately realizing it.

She contends happiness is believing in yourself, in spite of what others say and do; it is following what you think is right. She feels happiness is learning to laugh about situations, even when the joke is on you and that you should try to find humor and wit in the things around you.

According to Wilkens, people respond to a happy personality, not a grouch. In her view, happiness is also reliving pleasant memories through reviewing old photographs, rereading a favourite book, calling a friend whom you haven't seen for years and giggling over old times.

Finally, happiness is enjoying the little pleasures in life - the first snowstorm, a log fire, a bowl of delicious hot soup; concluding you can't start a malady in a happy body.

All of this may be so; however, I think I speak for the faculty, staff and student body here at the university when I say that happiness is knowing March Break starts today!

Have fun and enjoy!

Thanks to Andrew

by David MacCoubrey

Life can be an unpredictable twisting, turning roller-coaster ride at times. In the Western World, we are lucky enough to have life easy, as compared to many other countries. Still, the best you can do is hold on and hope you don't crash too hard.

If living becomes too rough, it can lead to anger, depression, a loss of self, or a feeling the world is generally inhospitable. It can be fairly hard to shake these feelings when you look around and view humanity negatively. This

negativity stems from the constant presence of wars, infidelity, corruption, the exploitation of weaker individuals, mass consumerism, and the general apathy of the population.

These thoughts I can fully understand because I have been there. Events can occur, however, to positively alter your perception of the world around you.

I recently believed I was going to have to withdraw from my studies, as there was an error in the documents I was supposed to fill out for the banks when taking time off from university several years back. The only way I could receive

my student loan this year was to pay a fairly large sum of money to the bank for back interest on my previous loan.

My friends and family were unable to raise the necessary funds and it seemed I was going to have to withdraw from school. I was feeling quite negative, especially towards the apathetic people working in the banking system. I was completely at a loss - I didn't know where to turn.

Then someone, with whom I was barely acquainted, heard of my dilemma and decided to help me

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